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ABSTRACT

The Communication Department at the University of Texas at Arlington offered an innovative news editing course taught collaboratively by a journalism professor and an editor of the "Fort Worth Star-Telegram." A syllabus was designed so that the lecture would coordinate with the laboratory as closely as possible. Students had the opportunity to transfer the theories that they learned in the lecture to the laboratory. The subjects that were covered included: a study of the electronic newsroom, role of the copy editor, duties of the copy editor, leads, headline writing, photographs and cutlines, wire service news, libel, type, layout, and supplemental material of broadcast editing and magazine editing. The goals for the students were to write cutlines and headlines and to assist with page makeup. Many journalistic points of view were imparted as students learned and practiced a myriad of editing skills as they interacted with an academic journalist, an editor of a metropolitan newspaper, and staff personnel of the student newspaper. Participants' reactions to the course were evaluated by means of an attitude test in the form of a five-point Likert scale. Questionnaires were given to the students to rate their opinions about the lecture and laboratory portions of the course. Most comments referred to the need for more laboratory time to practice editing skills. (The News Editing Lecture Attitude Test, the News Editing Laboratory Attitude Test and seven suggestions for co-teaching with a college professor and working professional are attached.) (MG)

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The Art of Collaborative Teaching

By Marian Wynne Haber

The University of Texas at Arlington

The Communication Department at the University of Texas at Arlington offered an innovative news editing course taught collaboratively by a journalism professor and an editor of the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, a metropolitan daily newspaper. In the fall semester of 1990 I taught the lecture portion of the course in two hour segments twice a week.

Editors are sometimes invited to lecture to journalism classes, but rarely are they included as an integral part of the classroom structure. They should be. So I invited Broc Sears, assistant managing editor for graphics at the Star-Telegram, to teach the laboratory.

I found only one published article about academic and industrial collaboration on teaching a college course. Rosemary L. Gates described a course in business writing that was collaboratively taught at the Catholic University of America.

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(Gates, 1989).

The Collaboration

I followed her advice on advance planning and met with representatives of our college newspaper, Sears, and the acting chairman of my university's Communication Department. Then I designed a syllabus so that the lecture would coordinate with the laboratory as closely as possible.

Students in the laboratory were divided into small groups of four or five, with each group meeting five times during the semester in approximately two hour sessions. The editor taught each group in the newsroom of The Shorthorn, the student newspaper at the university. Not only was the editor willing to share his contemporary expertise in editing, but he said he welcomed the opportunity to scout talent for his newspaper. He also had several years of experience teaching journalism courses at other universities.

What made this class particularly effective is that students had the opportunity to transfer the theories that they learned in the lecture to the laboratory. They progressed from practicing on workbook stories in the lecture to working with actual stories in their laboratory. The more advanced students had practice in editing stories that were published in their college newspaper. Some of them spent extra time in the newspaper office. News editing students who were working on VDT terminals called up stories that reporters submitted to appear in the next issue of The Shorthorn.

Under the supervision of the laboratory instructor, news editing students edited stories for wordiness, redundancy, grammar, spelling, punctuation, AP style, appropriate style of writing to suit the story, and other standards. The laboratory experience provided a positive reenforcement of skills students learned in the lecture and practiced in workbook exercises.

The subjects that were covered include: a study of the electronic newsroom, role of the copy editor, duties of the copy editor, leads, headline writing, photographs and cutlines, wire service news, libel, type, layout, and supplemental material of broadcast editing and magazine editing.

The goals were for students to write cutlines and headlines and assist with page makeup. By the end of the semester the future editors were supposed to see, save, and study their editing suggestions in a printed publication read by their fellow students.

The editors in training also learned practical applications of copy editing tools as they used their proportion wheels to change the sizes of photographs and charts and their pica poles to measure all the components that go into newspaper layout. This was emphasized in the lecture portion. It could have been done in the laboratory if the groups met more frequently or were smaller in size.

Many journalistic points of view were imparted as students learned and practiced a myriad of editing skills as they interacted with an academic journalist, an editor of a

metropolitan newspaper, and staff personnel of the student newspaper. They also received invaluable and practical newsroom experience by communicating with reporters before and after they edited their copy.

Course Evaluation

Participants' reactions to the course were evaluated by means of an attitude test in the form of a five-point Likert scale. (See Tables 1 and 2). Questionnaires were given to students to rate their opinions about the lecture and laboratory portions of the course. Open-ended questionnaires were also given to the editor of the Shorthorn newsroom personnel.

The five point scale consisted of (1) strongly agree (2) slightly agree (3) neutral (4) slightly disagree (5) strongly disagree. Students neither slightly disagreed nor strongly disagreed with any of the statements. Their attitudes about the lecture ranged from 1.5 to the statement, "The subject matter is taught at my level of comprehension," to 3.1 for "The content covered in the lecture correlated with what I practiced in the lab."

Two highly important statements, "I compare this course favorably with other journalism courses taught by one instructor" and "The course provided a meaningful learning experience for me" were both rated 2.1. In the comments section of the questionnaire one student said that more time should have been spent on layout and libel. Another felt that the class should enroll news editorial majors only and not students

specializing in public relations.

Scores in the laboratory attitude test ranged from 1.4 for "I am pleased with the instructor's knowledge of the subject" to 3.5 for "I am pleased with the frequency in which we met of five times during the semester." In the comments portion 14 students said that more lab time was needed to practice editing skills and one person said that he preferred a morning lab to an afternoon one.

The significant statements of "I compare this lab favorably with other journalism courses taught by one instructor" was rated 2.9 and "I believe that this class prepared me to practice copy editing skills after I graduate" was rated 3.4. "This lab provided a meaningful experience for me" was rated 2.5.

Essay evaluations of the course were submitted by the director and assistant director of student publications and the lab instructor. All three agreed that to be more effective labs should meet every week or every other week with a maximum of four to six students in each lab for three hours per lab. Because of insufficient lab time and varying abilities of the students, only about half of the students were considered proficient enough by lab personnel to edit actual stories that appeared in the student newspaper. The others practiced editing skills on previously published stories.

I agree with the suggestions from my colleagues. However, despite the relatively short time that students met in the labs, I am still firmly committed to the principle of collaboration

between academicians and working editors.

My grading system was lecture, 60 percent, and laboratory, 40 percent. I now believe that a breakdown of lecture, 75 percent, and laboratory, 25 percent, would have been better.

I am pleased that students received three points of view from an editor of a metropolitan daily newspaper, student newspaper personnel, and a journalism professor. While recognizing some shortcomings, I still consider our innovative class to be a success. I would encourage other journalism teachers to design a collaboratively taught editing class and to use collaboration in other communication subjects.

All 22 news editing students passed the course. The best way to measure the effectiveness of student performance in a collaboratively taught class would have been a pre-test post-test control group design. In it students of a collaboratively taught class and students in a traditional one-instructor class would be given an editing test before the class began and then another test when the class was completed. Then the results would be compared statistically. We lacked the time to compare performances.

I encourage teachers of other college subjects to teach collaboratively with professionals in their fields. Some of the subjects that are fertile for collaboratively taught classes are: radio-tv-film, business communication, engineering, drama, art, photography, and political science.

My advice for college teachers who are interested in

collaboratively taught classes is to meet with interested professionals in the field who have teaching experience, design a detailed syllabus ensuring that the lecture and the laboratory cover similar topics, and evaluate the course by means of written questionnaires at the close of the semester. Incorporate sound suggestions if you offer the class again.

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References

Gates, Rosemary L. (1989). "An Academic and Industrial Collaboration on Course Design." Journal of Business and Technical Communication, 3(2), 78-87.

News Editing Lecture Attitude Test

Please fill in the number that corresponds most closely with your opinion.

strongly agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	strongly disagree
1	2	3	4	5

1. I am comfortable with the size of my class. 1.6
2. I am pleased with the organization of this class in which a professor teaches the lecture and an editor teaches the lab. 2.5
3. The content covered in the lecture correlated with what I practiced in the lab. 3.1
4. The teaching method is appropriate to the subject. 1.9
5. The subject matter is taught at my level of comprehension. 1.5
6. There is enough variety in this course to hold my interest. 2.1
7. The equipment was adequate for the course content. 3
8. I receive enough individual attention to suit my needs. 1.8
9. I am pleased with the instructor's knowledge of the subject. 2.1
10. I receive enough instruction from my teacher before she gives me an assignment. 2.1
11. I receive enough feedback from my teacher after my assignment is completed. 2
12. The teacher stimulated interest in continuing the subjects taught in the class outside of the class. 2.3
13. I believe that the textbook is appropriate for this course. 1.7
14. I believe that the workbook is appropriate for this course. 2.4
15. I compare this course favorably with other journalism courses taught by one instructor. 2.1
16. This course provided a meaningful learning experience for me. 2.1

Comments and suggestions:

News Editing Laboratory Attitude Test

Please fill in the number that corresponds most closely with your opinion.

strongly agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	strongly disagree
1	2	3	4	5

1. I am pleased with the size of five people in my lab. 1.8
2. I am pleased with the frequency in which we met of five times during the semester. 3.5
3. I am pleased that the lab time was approximately two hours per meeting. 2.5
4. I am pleased that stories that I edited appeared in the Shorthorn newspaper. (only seven students answered this.) 3.3
5. The equipment was adequate for the lab. 3.4
6. The lab provided a meaningful learning experience for me. 2.5
7. I received enough individual attention to suit my needs. 2.5
8. I am pleased with the instructor's knowledge of the subject. 1.4
9. The teaching method is appropriate to the subject. 2.2
10. I receive enough instruction from my teacher before he gives an assignment. 2.3
11. I receive enough feedback from my teacher after my assignment is completed. 3
12. The teacher stimulated interest in continuing the subjects taught in the class outside of the class. 2.6
13. I compare this lab favorably with other journalism courses taught by one instructor. 2.9
14. I believe that this class prepared me to practice copy editing skills after I graduate. 3.4

Comments and suggestions:

The Art of Collaboration:

Co-Teaching with a college professor and working professional

By Marian Wynne Haber

The University of Texas at Arlington

1. Select a course that could be improved by collaborative teaching.
2. Find a working professional that has some teaching experience and has the time and desire to do collaborative teaching.
3 If you want to evaluate student performance in collaboratively taught classes versus students in traditional one-teacher courses, design a pre-test post-test control group. Test all students before the class begins and after the class has ended.
4. The academician and the professional should design a syllabus so that the lecture and laboratory cover similar subjects. Students should be able to apply principles learned in lecture to their laboratory.
5. Give the purpose of the class. Describe your grading formula by what percentage of the grade is taken from lecture and what percentage from laboratory.
6. When the course ends, evaluate it by means of a five point Likert scale questionnaire and open-ended questionnaire given to students and co-teachers.
7. Incorporate sound suggestions if you offer the course again.